

REMARKS

In the Office Action¹, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 4-9, and 26 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,405,203 to Collart et al. ("Collart"); and objected to claim 3 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication of the allowable subject matter recited in claim 3. By this Amendment, Applicants amend claims 1, 2, 4-9, and 26 and cancel claim 3. Claims 1, 2, 4-9, and 26 are now pending.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 1, 2, 4-9, and 26 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by *Collart*. However, for the sake of expediting prosecution of the application, Applicants have amended claim 1 to include subject matter from dependent claim 3.

Because the Examiner indicated that claim 3 "would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims" (Office Action at page 8), Applicants submit that claim 1 is allowable.

Independent claims 7, 8, and 26, though of different scope than claim 1, are allowable over *Watanabe* for at least the same reasons as claim 1. Claims 2, 4-6, and 9 depend from one of claims 1 and 8, and are thus also allowable over *Watanabe*, for at least the same reasons as claim 1.

¹ The Office Action contains a number of statements reflecting characterizations of the related art and the claims. Regardless of whether any such statement is identified herein, Applicants decline to automatically subscribe to any statement or characterization in the Office Action.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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